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PROPOSED REVISIONS TO THE MEDIUM-TERM PLAN FOR THE PERIOD 1992-1997*

MAJOR PROGRAMME VI. REGIONAL COOPERATION FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Programme 31. Regional cooperation for development in Asia and the Pacific

1. The preparation, format and content of the medium-term plan and its revisions are governed by the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation (ST/SGB/PPBME Rules/1(1987)).

2. Regulation 3.11 provides, inter alia, that the medium-term plan shall be revised as necessary every two years to incorporate required programme changes and that the proposed revisions shall be as detailed as required to incorporate the programme implications of the resolutions and decisions adopted by the intergovernmental organs or international conferences since the adoption of the plan.

3. The revised programme 31, Regional cooperation for development in Asia and the Pacific, replaces the narrative of programme 31 of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997, which was adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 45/253 of 21 December 1990 and issued in document A/45/6/Rev.1. The revised programme was reviewed by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific at its forty-eighth session.

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* After adoption by the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session, the complete revised medium-term plan will be issued in final printed form as Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/47/6/Rev.1).

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4. Because of the new structure proposed, necessitating extensive revisions, the complete text is presented below, replacing the narrative of programme 31 in document A/45/6/Rev.1 in its entirety. While subprogrammes 1 to 3 are entirely new and reflect the thematic approach adopted by the Commission at its forty-seventh session, subprogrammes 4 to 6 are, with some revisions, the continuation of existing subprogrammes. To facilitate review of the revised programme, the annex lists paragraphs from the current programme 31 that have not been substantially revised.

Programme 31. Regional cooperation for development in Asia and the Pacific

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PROGRAMME 31. REGIONAL COOPERATION FOR DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

A. Programme

1. General orientation

31.1 The legislative authority for programme 31 derives from the terms of reference of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) as adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its fourth session (resolution 37 (IV)) and as amended by the Council at its subsequent sessions, and ESCAP resolution 47/3.

31.2 The Commission formulates policies, programmes and strategies for the overall economic and social development of the Asian and Pacific region and provides inputs for the global policy-making processes of the organization. The Commission's subsidiary bodies review its substantive activities during their regular sessions and make recommendations to the Commission for its consideration and endorsement. The Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission provides a consultative link between the secretariat of ESCAP and the members and associate members of the Commission.

31.3 The Commission's activities are based on priorities and opportunities for programme linkages in the context of the medium-term plan so as to establish complementarity, avoid unnecessary duplication and thus make the most effective use of available resources. The programmes of the medium-term plan are regularly reviewed by the concerned United Nations bodies in compliance with the procedures of prior consultation in order to ensure a fully integrated approach to the implementation, at the regional level, of priority policies and programmes.

31.4 Revision of the medium-term plan's programme structure follows the adoption of resolution 47/3 by the Commission at its forty-seventh session, held at Seoul in April 1991, and subsequent modifications endorsed by the Meeting of Senior Officials on the Intergovernmental Structure Subsidiary to the Commission, held at Bangkok in January 1992. These decisions are the culmination of a series of activities mandated by the Commission, beginning with resolution 210 (XXXVI) of 29 March 1980 and aimed at streamlining the conference structure and increasing the ability of the Commission to respond to the changing situation and priority needs of the region. The proposed subsidiary structure comprises: (a) three thematic committees: the Committee for Regional Economic Cooperation and its Steering Committee; the Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development; and the Committee on Poverty Alleviation through Economic Growth and Social Development; (b) two other committees: the Committee on Transport and Communications and the Committee on Statistics; and (c) two special bodies: on Least Developed and Land-locked Developing Countries, and on Pacific Island Developing Countries.

31.5 Not only the adoption of the thematic approach and the streamlined conference structure, but also rapid and fundamental changes in the political, economic and social relations among regional States and between the ESCAP region and other parts of the world in the past two years have necessitated a complete rethinking of regional priorities and the role of ESCAP in the

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region. The changing needs and priorities of the region that have guided the substance of the proposed subprogrammes are rapprochement between the super-Powers, which has generally led to reduction of regional conflicts and the trend towards political stability and the desire for speedy recovery; transition of several centrally planned economies in the region to the market economy, including the newly independent central Asian republics, some of which will become members of ESCAP; domestic and global demands for economic growth with equity; growing interest by developing countries of the region in learning from the experiences of more advanced countries; appearance of regional economic blocs and the potential threat of growing protectionism and discriminatory terms of trade; the need for strengthening intraregional trade and investment; and the increasingly prominent role of the private sector and non-governmental organizations in development.

31.6 The transitional economies of the region appear to be specially interested in forging greater links with other countries whose past economic development experience would be useful to them. Since most of the transitional economies seem prepared to open up their economies for foreign trade and investment, new economic complementarities are likely to emerge in the region, further strengthening the momentum for regional economic cooperation. They will require considerable inflows of foreign capital and technical assistance in order to effect the kinds of restructuring, reforms and reconstruction that will enable them to have sustained growth. Given their urgent needs, the development requirements of this group of countries remain largely unmet. There is, therefore, considerable need for mobilizing further assistance both at the regional and international levels in favour of the transitional economies of the ESCAP region.

31.7 The proposed revisions to programme 31 and its related subprogrammes are oriented to the requirement of rapidly changing socio-economic conditions and the emerging development needs of Asia and the Pacific, sharpening its analytical focus on critical and urgent problems of the developing countries of the region. The solution to and amelioration of these problems require structural changes in work method and integrated approaches to programme formulation and implementation as well as rational use of resources. The thematic approach to programming and multidisciplinary teamwork will be applied to achieve the plan's objectives.

2. Overall strategy

31.8 The programme will be implemented by the secretariat of ESCAP. The Commission will continue to provide a forum in which the aspirations of members and associate members for economic and social development are articulated, and where policies and actions are designed to respond to new challenges and opportunities. Efforts will be continued to implement the mandates of the Commission, drawing in particular on the advantages of the Commission as the main catalytic and coordinating body for regional action, and on its multidisciplinary capabilities. These advantages will be strengthened further through the adoption of the thematic approach to the multifaceted development issues of the region, and operational modalities designed to promote intraregional cooperation, in conjunction, as appropriate, with subregional groupings and regional intergovernmental organizations. In achieving the plan's objectives, the secretariat strategy will emphasize

complementarity and harmonization of its activities internally through the organizing of areas of work into thematically related subprogrammes and externally through close communication with the above-mentioned bodies, other regional commissions and programmes of the United Nations.

31.9 The ongoing efforts to liberalize international and intraregional trade will be promoted increasingly in order to facilitate the flow of goods and services, investment, technology and labour. Arrangements will be made to facilitate information exchange and technical and economic cooperation among developing countries, and between them and developed countries. To this end, existing relationships between ESCAP and other entities, including the private sector and non-governmental organizations active in the region, will be further examined and expanded.

31.10 Countries in transition to the market economy, particularly the central Asian republics of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, face special problems that need urgent attention. In view of the fact that ESCAP was already involved in assisting some of the member countries going through this transition, and in expectation of other countries in a similar situation joining ESCAP, the Commission will continue to organize special fact-finding missions, provide advisory services, training and assistance in policy and plan formulation, as well as engage in technical cooperation among developing countries activities for these countries.

31.11 Coordination with other United Nations bodies takes place through various means, such as the establishment of formal arrangements, including special task forces in specific fields, and in that context various cooperative and joint activities are planned in substantive areas. Other means of coordination include participation in inter-agency meetings and cost-sharing in joint activities at the regional, subregional and national levels.

3. Subprogramme structure and priorities

31.12 In the light of that orientation, the programme of ESCAP will consist of the following subprogrammes, of which subprogrammes 1, 2 and 3 are designated high priority:

Subprogramme 1. Regional economic cooperation

Subprogramme 2. The environment and sustainable development

Subprogramme 3. Poverty alleviation through economic growth and social development

Subprogramme 4. Transport and communications

Subprogramme 5. Statistics

Subprogramme 6. Least developed, land-locked and island developing countries

B. Subprogrammes

SUBPROGRAMME 1. REGIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION

(a) Objectives

31.13 The legislative authority for the subprogramme derives from Commission resolutions 235 (XL), 256 (XLII), 274 (XLIV), 47/1 and 47/2; the ESCAP Plan of Action on Technology for Development (E/ESCAP/398, annex) adopted by the Commission at its fortieth session; and reports of the Commission (E/1980/26-E/ESCAP/188, paras. 467, 469, 470 and 473; E/1987/34-E/ESCAP/590, paras. 290, 291 and 294; E/1988/35-E/ESCAP/644, para. 180; E/1989/33-E/ESCAP/693, paras. 170 and 182-192; E/1990/40-E/ESCAP/748, para. 248; and E/1991/35-E/ESCAP/822, paras. 221 and 314).

31.14 Momentous changes are occurring in the region and on the world scene that are likely to give added impetus to regional economic cooperation in the Asian and Pacific region. A primary aim of the activities in this subprogramme will therefore be to analyse the emerging trends towards greater complementarity and interdependence among countries in the region, with a view to evolving an effective implementation of policies that would take advantage of growing opportunities for mutually beneficial regional economic cooperation. A key objective would be to ensure that the trend towards liberalization and openness and the growing desire on the part of countries in the region to improve relations and economic ties among themselves is translated into accelerating the pace of economic and social progress in the Asian and Pacific region. Increasing regional interdependence has, in fact, created several structural problems that need to be addressed in a concerted manner. These problems include the reduction of imbalances in trade, adjustments to more open and competitive markets and efforts to stimulate new patterns of growth. Moreover, several centrally planned economies in the region are making a transition to a market economy. In the process, there will be disruption in the regional pattern of trade and investment. Regional cooperation can assist in directing these changes into a positive rather than a negative sum game.

31.15 At the global level, a trend towards protecting national interests through a proliferation of discriminatory trade alliances and regional groupings and by raising barriers against competitive exporters is discernible in the emerging trade environment. Increasing competition from the newly industrializing economies and from emerging newly industrializing economies, particularly in the area of export of manufactures in the moderate technology sector, on the one hand, and from low-income developing countries with labour-intensive products, on the other, has led many countries to heighten their trade barriers on exports from their competitors. Developed countries are also increasingly demanding reciprocity in trade relations from developing countries, which is more clearly visible in the existing policies on the generalized system of preferences. The Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations could have a profound effect on the trade prospects of developing countries of the region by conferring both new opportunities and new responsibilities for the conduct of international trade, but its outcome is still uncertain and many countries are still exploring alternative arrangements for promoting their national interests. Expansion of international trade through the maintenance of free and open markets and the

enhancement of value addition in exports will be a key instrument for the growth of both the export-led and other economies of the region in order to accelerate the momentum of economic development. Host countries will continue to need expertise during the 1990s in the structuring of appropriate foreign investment regimes and fair and equitable joint venture arrangements. A key challenge is to devise foreign investment policies that strike the right balance between facilitation and regulation. The intraregional flow of investment will continue to increase and joint ventures will be among the increasingly favoured newer types of foreign direct investment.

31.16 Moreover, as concerns for unemployment, poverty alleviation, urban congestion, energy crisis and environmental degradation reach unprecedented levels, industrial and technological development emerge as key policy variables in ensuring growth with equity and sustainability. The general trend of decreasing commodity prices and the inability of the agricultural sector to provide employment to the region's fast-growing population, coupled with problems in arresting environmental degradation, further reinforces the role of industrial and technological development as a crucial element in any development strategy. Furthermore, the fast pace of technological change and the increasing application of new and emerging technologies have resulted in altering the production processes in all sectors, but especially more so in industrial activities, which require reorientation in assistance programmes rendered by international organizations. It is, therefore, not only desirable but necessary that taking all the above-mentioned concerns into account, Asian and Pacific developing countries should endeavour to find innovative approaches for strengthening industrialization and the upgrading and diversification of technology to withstand external shocks. The prescriptions contained in the Tokyo Programme on Technology for Development in Asia and the Pacific (1984), the Seoul Plan of Action for Promoting Industrial Restructuring in Asia and the Pacific (1991) and the outcome of the deliberations at the ESCAP Meeting of Ministers of Industry and Technology (1992) will continue to provide guidelines for further industrial and technological development in the region during the plan period.

31.17 In the light of the above, the objective of the subprogramme on regional economic cooperation will be to increase the technical capacity of developing countries in their efforts:

(a) To sustain the momentum of growth and development in the region without aggravating intraregional income disparities;

(b) To seek solutions to the problems arising from the growing economic interdependence of countries in the region;

(c) To manage the smooth transition to a market economy for the centrally planned economies in the region and facilitate the eventual inclusion of these economies in transition in multilateral trade systems and in regional division of labour;

(d) To restructure their economies in line with the new international division of labour;

(e) Accelerate the pace of social and economic progress and the structural transformation of their economies;

(f) Expand value-added trade, trade in manufactures, expand intraregional trade, merchandise and invisible trade;

(g) Mobilize resources for trade-related investments with particular emphasis on improvement of accessibility to export finance for small and medium-scale exporters in the developing countries;

(h) Adopt new technologies associated with the automatic system for customs data and the United Nations electronic data interchange for administration, commerce and transport;

(i) Operate effectively in the trade environment expected to emerge from the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations;

(j) Withstand negative effects of proliferation of discriminatory trade policies, alliances, regional groupings and other barriers against competitive exporters;

(k) Improve the trade performance of the land-locked, least developed and island developing countries to revitalize their economic development;

(l) Integrate industrial activities at the regional and global levels;

(m) Promote entrepreneurship, employment in rural areas and women's participation in industry and technology;

(n) Accelerate industrialization through the enhancement of technological capabilities for meeting competitively the domestic demand as well as for exports of manufactured products;

(o) Strengthen infrastructural facilities for technological development, including human resources development;

(p) Adapt, inter alia, to new and emerging technologies;

(q) Develop and promote agro-based, agro-allied industries and other small and medium-scale industries, with particular focus on poverty alleviation.

31.18 ESCAP will also aim at increasing the knowledge and understanding of the problems and issues to be addressed, particularly in relation to value-added trade, trade regimes for manufactures, the potential for trade expansion in manufactures, investment opportunities, joint ventures, new sectors with high trade potential, including services, and financial requirements for the promotion of trade and trade-related investments.

(b) Course of action of the secretariat

31.19 In order to increase the knowledge and understanding of problems and issues addressed in this subprogramme, analyses of regional economic and social trends will be undertaken and published in the Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific as a basis for selection of themes and courses of action by the thematic committee for regional economic cooperation. In addition, the secretariat will undertake additional in-depth studies to

facilitate the enhancement or strengthening of the scope of regional economic cooperation. Furthermore, the secretariat intends to strengthen the statistical base of information on economic and social development trends and the analytical sophistication to enable it to forecast more accurately the major developments in the global and regional economy and their implications for regional economic cooperation. In view of the region's diversity, greater attention will be directed towards the adoption of a differentiated approach in analysing the situation of specific groups of countries, while making every effort to identify common trends and emerging convergence of the underlying process of growth, policies and economic interests. An important part of the work will be the development, collection and dissemination of major economic aggregates and social indicators in order to facilitate analysis of regional economic and social trends. Emphasis would be given to improving the time-series of economic and social data and increasing the timeliness of the aggregates and indicators.

31.20 In the field of international and intraregional trade, research studies and training will be undertaken with a view to: (a) responding to the uncertainties of the prevailing external environment by appropriate adjustments at both the trade policy and trade promotion levels; (b) diversifying exports by a more pronounced shift from trade intensiveness in natural resources and commodities towards trade intensiveness in intermediate and higher technology; (c) improving access to new and emerging markets as a result of changes in the legal and business environment in many countries following adoption of market-oriented reforms; (d) strengthening existing regional mechanisms, including the Bangkok Agreement, the Asian Clearing Union and the Asian Reinsurance Corporation, and investigating the modalities for increased links between economic groupings in the region, promoting cooperation among the region's chambers of commerce and industry and entrepreneurs, with a view to increasing intraregional trade; and (e) improving cost-effective techniques of trade promotion through information and trade facilitating measures, including the strengthening of measures for human resources development. Harmonization, coverage and timeliness of trade statistics will be improved and software packages and trade statistics databases will be prepared.

31.21 In the field of investment flows, joint ventures and development finance, meetings and consultations will be organized to facilitate effective interactions among representatives of the members and associate members of ESCAP, subregional groups, the private sector, donor countries and financial institutions within and outside the region to increase the flow of investment and development finance into the region through such measures as promotion of joint ventures, capital investment, transfer of technology and financing of development activities on preferential terms. An in-depth review of trends and the potential for strengthening regional cooperation in this important area will be undertaken. Priority will be given to the enhancement of investment flows and development finance to the least developed, land-locked and island developing countries. Up-to-date and comparable statistical data on investment flows and development finance will be published. Special attention will also be given to ensure that the studies and activities undertaken will keep in view the environmental and social concerns as well as the problems faced by joint ventures in the region's countries that are in transition to a market economy.

31.22 In the field of industrial and technological development, activities will focus on: (a) regional support measures for effective industrial restructuring in the developing countries of the region, taking into account the recommendations of the Meeting of Ministers of Industry and Technology and the Seoul Plan of Action for Promoting Industrial Restructuring in Asia and the Pacific; (b) strategies to promote regional complementarities in industrial activities leading ultimately to improved competitiveness of manufacturing and regional integration among economies; (c) new and innovative measures to promote domestic and foreign investments for industrialization; (d) promotion of joint ventures and intraregional trade of manufactured outputs; (e) sharing of experience and facilities in industrial and technological human resources development; (f) examination of crucial factors for safeguarding the sustainability of industrial and technological development, including environmental protection and efficient resource utilization; (g) improved and efficient mechanisms for the transfer, adaptation and upgrading of technology; (h) assessment, introduction and support of appropriate technology, including new and emerging technology; and (i) support to regional institutions such as the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology and the Regional Network for Agricultural Machinery. Through analytical studies, workshops, seminars and intergovernmental meetings, the secretariat will evolve new and innovative measures, policy options and strategies for institution-building for the promotion of industrial and technological development in members and associate members of ESCAP, especially the least developed, land-locked and island developing countries and those in transition to a market economy. Particular attention will be paid to the implications of industrial restructuring and technological development for poverty alleviation, industrial capacity-building and efficiency in resource utilization. Measures will be devised and implemented within the framework of economic and technical cooperation among developing countries. Assistance will be provided through activities aimed at the development and application of information technology in the government sector, the conduct of research on and training exercises in topics of interest, and the development of methodologies for the sustainability of the industrial and technological development processes.

31.23 Cooperation among subregional groups and organizations in the ESCAP region, such as the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation, the Association of South-East Asian Nations, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, the South Pacific Commission and the Forum Secretariat will be supported as building blocks for strengthening cooperation in the region as a whole. Through the organization of meetings and in-depth studies, interaction among the subregional groups will be promoted to enhance regional cooperation with a view to accelerating the pace of social and economic progress and the structural transformation of the Asian and Pacific economies. A publication of subregional data profiles and improved intercountry comparability of data will be issued to reflect major trends in the area of cooperation among regional groups; efforts will also be directed towards strengthening links between the dynamic economies of the region and the least developed and island developing countries, with a view to bringing them into the mainstream of regional development.

SUBPROGRAMME 2. THE ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

(a) Objectives

31.24 The legislative authority for the subprogramme derives from General Assembly resolutions 32/158, paragraph 8, 42/186, 42/187, 43/18, 44/46, paragraphs 9, 14, and 15, and 45/72, paragraphs 8, 13, and 14; resolution VIII of the United Nations Water Conference; Economic and Social Council resolutions 1979/67, 1979/68, 1979/70, 1981/80, 1981/81, 1985/49, 1987/9 and 1987/57; Commission resolutions 267 (XLIV), 45/5, 47/7 and 47/8; and the reports of the Commission (E/1987/34-E/ESCAP/590, paras. 373, 381, 382 and 385-387; E/1988/35-E/ESCAP/644, paras. 365, 368, 374, 379, 380, 382 and 412-442; E/1989/33-E/ESCAP/693, paras. 317-319, 321, 326-328 and 381-412; E/1990/40-E/ESCAP/748, paras. 306 and 322-369, and E/1991/35-E/ESCAP/822, paras. 315-321, 364 and 489-524). Activities under this subprogramme will also be guided by the decisions of the United Nations International Conference on Water and the Environment, the Second United Nations Conference on Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the Regional Strategy on Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development.

31.25 With regard to policies and plans to ensure environmentally sound and sustainable development, it is essential that countries begin to undertake the necessary action for maintaining or improving the environment for future generations before it is too late or too costly to do so, and ensure that the protection of the environment is viewed as an integral part of the development process. Economic growth, rising population pressure and urbanization have had a serious impact on the environment of the region, threatening to negate the real economic progress that has been made.

31.26 The principle of environmentally sound and sustainable development should guide the formulation of policies and plans for all sectors of economies to ensure the protection and improvement of the environment. The lack of such policies has led to continuous deterioration of the environment. Expertise and technologies are particularly inadequate in developing countries of the region for enabling the implementation of environmentally sound and sustainable development policies and strategies. The environment in the Asian and Pacific region is facing serious threats owing to rapid land degradation, deforestation, watershed degradation, soil erosion, soil nutrient loss, waterlogging, salination, toxification of soils, unhealthy village and urban environments, and the pollution of air, lakes, rivers and seas, thus affecting severely the resources and amenities provided by nature.

31.27 Natural resources development and management will face increasing challenges in the 1990s because of the scarcity and indiscriminate exploitation of natural resources, the rapid population growth in the region and ever-increasing pressure on the environment. There is a growing need for accelerated assessment of natural resources in order to establish the total resource base for economic development. The base of sustainable economic development in developing countries lies in their natural resources. Improved information on these resources will reduce the uncertainty in decision-making. Developing geo-information techniques to address such information needs have, therefore, become an essential issue. In many countries of the region, a considerable amount of the water resources is not

utilized properly owing to lack of national plans and programmes for sustainable and environmentally sound water resources development and management or incompatibility of existing plans and programmes with national economic and social development plans.

31.28 In the area of energy development and management, developing countries will still require large inputs of energy in support of their economic and social development plans. Recent regional and global concerns over vulnerability to oil price changes and high intensities of energy consumption and its possible long-term environmental impact have highlighted the need to formulate suitable policies to increase the efficiency of energy use. The major problems lie in the inadequate management of the energy sector owing to conditions of underdevelopment particular to developing countries and to lack of resources such as trained manpower, technology know-how and information on sectoral energy demand. Demand-side management needs to be more widely adopted, energy conservation and the efficient utilization of energy require continued attention and measures to mitigate negative environmental impact need to be incorporated into energy plans and legislation. The plight of the rural and urban poor, in their lack of access to affordable clean energy, remains unresolved. Improved collaboration between developed and developing countries in addressing those specific problems will contribute greatly to their solution.

31.29 Natural disasters, such as floods, droughts, cyclones and storm surges, earthquakes, landslides and volcanic eruptions frequently affect a large number of countries in the region, causing great loss of life and extensive damage to property and infrastructure. Vulnerability to climatic and geologic hazards continues to increase, mainly because of growing population pressure and the concentration of development activities in hazard-prone areas. Furthermore, environmental deterioration has been an increasingly important factor in aggravating several instances of natural disasters. The widespread destruction of lives and property caused by natural and man-made disasters takes a considerable toll on the development efforts.

31.30 The objectives of the subprogramme are to increase the awareness, knowledge and understanding of the problems to be addressed by identifying and assessing environmental concerns and trends in the region, promoting regional and inter-agency cooperation and use of new technologies, and to strengthen and increase the technical capacity of developing countries in their efforts:

(a) To establish policies and plans for environmentally sound and sustainable development, integration of the environmental imperatives into the development process, energy and natural resources development and management, and natural disaster reduction;

(b) To use environmentally sound technologies and promote new information technologies, particularly remote sensing and geographic information systems in the area of natural resources management and environment monitoring;

(c) To use, manage and allocate natural resources to meet competing demands and environmental requirements, making better use of existing infrastructure and financial resources;

(d) To formulate and implement energy development and management programmes that substitute oil and conserve energy as much as possible while protecting the environment;

(e) To develop mitigation plans concerning natural hazards for short- and long-term prevention, preparedness and community awareness;

(f) To establish and strengthen early warning systems to avert or minimize the hazardous impact of natural disasters.

(b) Course of action of the secretariat

31.31 The activities will aim at promoting the implementation of the Regional Strategy on Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development, which emerged from the Ministerial-level Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, held at Bangkok in October 1990, and regional cooperation through an interdisciplinary approach involving joint institutional action at the regional level, comprehensive national and regional environmental planning, development and transfer of environmentally benign technology, integration of environmental considerations into planning processes, environmental awareness at the local level and appropriate resource management strategies and policies. The activities will also include promoting development of policies to ensure protection and improvement of the environment in all sectors of the economy at the national level. The secretariat will support activities on endogenous capacity-building for national Governments, non-governmental organizations, research and training institutes, the media and subregional and regional institutions. Monitoring and assessment of the environment and establishment and upgrading of national databases for this purpose will be supported.

31.32 Closer cooperation and effective joint programming among United Nations bodies and agencies, intergovernmental organizations and bilateral donor agencies/Governments will be promoted through the Inter-agency Committee on Environment and Development.

31.33 In the area of natural resources development and management, activities will address the need for planned mineral resources exploration and development and responsible land use, through training, exchange of information, technical advice and the strengthening of relevant national and regional institutions; preparation of reviews, studies and maps on geology and land use, mineral resources and potential, mineral economics and trade; and advisory services in the formulation of national policies, strategies and programmes for the development of mineral resources and land use, including the review of mining codes and related legislation and the promotion of foreign investment.

31.34 Water resources development activities will address problems in the water sector within the wider context of environment and development, including pertinent guidelines, reports, seminars, workshops, expert group meetings and advisory services. Assistance will be provided in the formulation and implementation of national master water plans, introduction of integrated water resources management, control and prevention of water pollution, assessment of water resources and water demand management within the framework of national economic and social objectives. The secretariat

will disseminate information on current developments in the water resources field, promote regional cooperation through technical cooperation among developing countries on various aspects of water resources development, legislation and management; and coordinate the regional activities of the United Nations bodies in the field of water resources development through the Inter-agency Task Force on Water for Asia and the Pacific.

31.35 In the area of energy resources management and development, activities will include research studies on energy topics of common interest, including resiliency of energy economies, technology options in mitigating global environmental concerns, research and development strategies, financing and investment strategies and long-term supply optimization, as well as energy mix strategies and strategies for penetration of technologies for new and renewable sources of energy. Results will be disseminated through seminars, symposia and publications, including meetings to discuss improvements and sharpen the focus of energy policies, and to enhance regional energy management and coordination through the regional energy working groups.

31.36 The secretariat will continue efforts to assist developing countries in improving energy data and build upon previous work of database development and sectoral energy demand studies. The programme of work will expand into other areas, such as scenario generation and forecasting, energy pricing (for example long-run marginal costs), energy conservation, clean coal technology, natural gas, electric power systems, new and renewable sources of energy and rural energy. Training courses on methodologies including microcomputer modelling techniques, workshops, seminars, consultancy and advisory services will be provided.

31.37 The secretariat will assist the member States as regards the legal, economic and technical implications of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, as well as with the development of a regional approach to marine affairs; it will promote the integration of marine-related sectors into a multidisciplinary marine policy; assist member countries in exercising their rights and fulfilling their obligations under the Convention, including those related to the marine environment through the provision of information and advisory services; foster regional cooperation in marine affairs by organizing regional seminars, workshops and training courses; strengthen national and regional organizations concerned with the exploration, development and management of living and non-living marine resources, including the coastal zone; and facilitate the transfer of technologies and marine scientific research through training courses, study tours and technical publications.

31.38 In the field of remote sensing and geographic information systems, activities will be designed to enable the member countries to meet the challenge of the new technology applications and to address the information needs in environmental and natural resources development and management. The activities will include research and pilot studies, training courses, seminars, workshops and meetings, advisory, consultancy and information services. It is expected that activities will be carried out through the creation of necessary infrastructure within the secretariat and establishment of a space applications programme. Since remote sensing and geographic information system technologies are multidisciplinary in nature, close cooperation within the secretariat and continuous coordination among the member countries will be enhanced in the course of action.

31.39 Natural disaster reduction activities will aim at strengthening of the disaster preparedness and mitigation capabilities of member countries through provision of technical assistance and training of key personnel in prediction and early warning, risk assessment, hazard mapping and land-use planning, hazard monitoring and damage assessment, selection of appropriate structural and non-structural measures for minimizing risk to lives, property and infrastructure; raising public awareness and preparedness on what to do before, during and after a calamity; strengthening or introducing institutional frameworks for natural disaster preparedness and mitigation; development of appropriate guidelines and strategies for application of new technologies to natural disaster reduction, establishment or strengthening capabilities in assessment of social and economic impact of natural disasters; development of national disaster management plans; promotion of regional cooperation in natural disaster reduction; and provision of substantive support to such intergovernmental institutions as the Typhoon Committee and the Panel on Tropical Cyclones.

SUBPROGRAMME 3. POVERTY ALLEVIATION THROUGH ECONOMIC GROWTH AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

(a) Objectives

31.40 The legislative authority for the subprogramme derives from General Assembly resolutions 37/221, 40/105, 41/97, 41/190, 42/64, 42/125, 42/178, 42/191, 43/94, 43/98, 43/101, 43/181, 44/212 and 45/199; Economic and Social Council resolutions 1986/10, 1988/9, 1988/19, 1988/30 and 1988/59 to 1988/61; Commission resolutions 185 (XXXIV), 249 (VLII), 252 (XLIII), 260 (XLIII), 263 (XLIII), 265 (XLIV), 266 (XLIV), 268 (XLIV), 273 (XLIV), 274 (XLIV), 45/1, 45/3, 45/7, 46/2, 47/5 and 48/... [adopting the Manila Declaration on the Social Development Strategy for the ESCAP Region Towards the Year 2000 and Beyond]; and the annual reports of the Commission (E/1980/26-E/ESCAP/188, paras. 467-474 and annex I; E/1987/34-E/ESCAP/590, paras. 290, 291 and 294; and E/1988/35-E/ESCAP/644, para. 180).

31.41 The ESCAP region has by and large recorded substantial economic growth during the last three decades. Despite the region's generally impressive growth, poverty has become more entrenched for large segments of society. More than 800 million people, or approximately 72 per cent of the world's absolute poor, reside in the ESCAP region. Their level of well-being is marked by deprivation of the basic needs of food, shelter, clothing and essential services such as clean water, sanitation, health care and education.

31.42 The sharply skewed distribution of income and wealth throughout much of the region and the differential opportunities for access to public services and other social "goods" are a major constraint on further economic growth and a contributing factor underlying social discontent and instability. Major new initiatives are urgently needed to ameliorate the situation.

31.43 While recognizing that sustained economic growth is an essential prerequisite for the eradication of absolute poverty, the regional development record clearly demonstrates that growth per se cannot resolve the issue. In dealing with the poverty situation, it will therefore be necessary for countries of the region to adopt policy reforms and development strategies that take due account of the need to promote social equity within the context

of growth. In that connection, particular attention will need to be given to upgrading the region's human resources, with special attention to the situation of disadvantaged social groups.

31.44 The alleviation of poverty requires an integrated, multisectoral approach involving such diverse issues as social policy and services, human resources development, employment generation, population and development, and human settlements. As a large share of the region's poor live in rural and isolated communities, attention also needs to be given to agriculture and rural development. In addition, the disproportionately high incidence of poverty among women calls for special consideration to the issue of gender in all efforts to generate growth with equity.

31.45 The primary objectives of the subprogramme are to increase the understanding, and improve the quality and availability of data and analyses of social trends, issues and problems, and of the social costs of economic reform and structural adjustment, and to increase the technical capacity of developing countries, including those with transitional economies, in their efforts:

(a) To review and assess, in the areas of growth strategies and structural reform, the impact of economic reforms on the distribution of income and wealth, with special reference to their effects on the welfare of the poor and other disadvantaged groups;

(b) To establish programmes and measures that are targeted to provide direct benefits to the poor and marginalized sectors of the population;

(c) To strengthen, in the area of human resources development, institutional mechanisms for integrated human resources development and to formulate policies and programmes in line with the Jakarta Plan of Action on Human Resources Development in the ESCAP region;

(d) To formulate, in the area of social policy, social services and social security, policies and programmes aimed at alleviating poverty and improving the quality of life of the poor and other disadvantaged groups in line with the Social Development Strategy for the ESCAP Region Towards the Year 2000 and Beyond;

(e) To promote, in the area of women in development, the full integration of women in development and improve their status in line with the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women;

(f) To promote, in the area of population issues, integrated approaches to population planning;

(g) To improve, in the area of agriculture and rural development, policies and programmes for enhancing agricultural growth and rural development with a view to improving the conditions of the rural poor;

(h) To formulate, in the area of human settlements and urbanization, policies, plans and programmes to improve the quality of life in human settlements, and to strengthen institutions that manage human settlements programmes.

(b) Course of action of the secretariat

31.46 In the area of growth strategies and structural reform, in-depth reviews and analyses will be undertaken to examine the need to lessen the social costs of economic reform and structural adjustment, and advice will be provided on appropriate courses of government intervention. Technical assistance will be provided to help redress the adverse employment, income, social and other consequences of economic reforms. Studies will be undertaken of the impact of structural adjustment and economic reforms on the pattern of government expenditure, with special reference to the social sector, which is likely to be most severely affected. In so doing, national Governments will be consulted during the review and analysis.

31.47 In the area of human resources development, assistance will be provided to strengthen the institutional capacity of the national agencies participating in the ESCAP Network of National Focal Points for Human Resources Development. Policy studies will be conducted on employment and human resources development, including the quality of life as an aspect of human resources development, and on science and technology. Cooperative relationships between the national focal points, non-governmental organizations and the private sector will be promoted to ensure an intersectoral approach to policy development and programme implementation. Reliable and up-to-date data to assess changing national human resources situations and needs will be developed. Training courses will be conducted to upgrade the skills of public sector and non-governmental organization personnel in the planning and delivery of human resources development services.

31.48 In the area of social policy, social services and social security, a regional network of concerned government agencies will be established to support the implementation of the Social Development Strategy for the ESCAP Region Towards the Year 2000 and Beyond. Research studies will be undertaken and advisory services and other direct support will be rendered in strengthening national social development policies, plans and programmes, with particular reference to disadvantaged social groups, including youth, disabled persons and the elderly. In that connection, special attention will be given to the establishment and upgrading of social security systems, including such measures as income maintenance arrangements, food subsidy and direct food distribution programmes, child support and health, old age and survivors' insurance schemes. Technical assistance will be provided to promote cooperation between government agencies and non-governmental organizations in the delivery of social services. Studies will be undertaken and workshops will be convened to devise improved means of reducing the incidence of crime, particularly juvenile crime. Activities to promote the establishment and effective functioning of community-level drug abuse demand control programmes will be continued. Activities in cooperation with the United Nations Office at Vienna will be undertaken in observance of and as follow-up to the International Year of the Family. A social development newsletter examining current social issues in the region will be published and disseminated on a regular basis.

31.49 In the area of women in development, a regional intergovernmental meeting will be convened in preparation for the world conference on women, planned to be held in 1995. The regional implementation of global strategies, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination

against Women and the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women will be monitored. Training workshops will be organized and advisory services will be provided to improve the integration of women's concerns into development planning. Technical assistance will be provided through legal literacy campaigns and other means to improve the legal status of women. Effective strategies will be developed, training courses will be conducted and information exchange activities will be carried out by the Women's Information Network for Asia and the Pacific to assist in the establishment and strengthening of national women's information systems.

31.50 In the area of population issues, research will be undertaken and technical assistance, including training and the provision of fellowships, will be provided to assist Governments in strengthening national capabilities in development policy and planning with respect to such major population issues as population ageing, spatial distribution of population, the relationships between population and the environment, the role of women, infant and child mortality and family planning. The regional implementation of the World Population Plan of Action as well as the Asia-Pacific Call for Action on Population and Development will be monitored. The improved analysis and utilization of data provided by population censuses, registration systems for vital statistics, demographic sample surveys and family planning records will be promoted. Assistance will continue to be provided in the development of population information systems, including the Asia-Pacific Population Information Network.

31.51 In the area of agriculture and rural development, support will be provided to national programmes on rural poverty alleviation through increasing agricultural productivity and rural employment, including on-farm, off-farm and non-farm employment and self-employment. Assistance will be provided for developing income-raising programmes for the rural poor, including small and marginal farmers, landless agricultural workers, rural artisans and women. Advisory services will be provided on the improvement of facilities for the rural poor, with emphasis on local resource mobilization, agrarian reform, rural investment, marketing and credit and popular participation. In addition, support measures will be provided for environmentally sustainable agricultural development. Support for increased and balanced use of yield-increasing agricultural inputs and innovative institutional mechanisms for the procurement, supply, marketing and distribution of those inputs will also be provided. The implementation of these activities will feature close collaboration with the Inter-agency Committee on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific.

31.52 In the area of human settlements, support will be provided to assist countries in attaining adequate shelter by the year 2000 through the mobilization of the productive capacity of all sectors. Strategies will be devised to address the problems stemming from rapid urbanization through improved urban management and the development of rural centres and secondary cities. Assistance will be provided in formulating and implementing national action plans for environmentally sound and sustainable urban development and urban poverty alleviation. Coordinated action between local authorities and community-based non-governmental organizations for the improvement of human settlements will be encouraged. Support will be provided for the regularization of tenure rights to land occupied by disadvantaged social groups and for the development of systems for the delivery of land for new

settlements. Local bodies that set standards and specifications on housing and institutions that provide housing loans will be encouraged to promote the use of improved indigenous technologies and materials. Support will be rendered to the regional network of local authorities and non-governmental organizations.

SUBPROGRAMME 4. TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

(a) Objectives

31.53 The legislative authority for the subprogramme derives from General Assembly resolutions 39/227, 45/199 and 45/206; Commission resolutions 236 (XL) and 47/10; Economic and Social Council resolutions 1984/78 and 1991/75; the Declaration on the Launching of the Transport and Communications Decade by the Ministers Responsible for Transport and Communications; and the reports of the Commission (E/1989/33-E/ESCAP/693, paras. 467 and 469; E/1990/40-E/ESCAP/748, paras. 473 and 475-479; and E/1991/35-E/ESCAP/822, paras. 472, 474 and 476).

31.54 There are great differences in the current development status of the transport and communications sectors of the ESCAP developing members and associate members. This is due mainly to the complexities of geography and location, especially in least developed, archipelagic and land-locked countries, and the different levels of economic development, as well as the countries' development perspectives and policy orientations. However, some common factors have prevented these countries from acquiring a modern and efficient transport and communications system. Among those factors are insufficient investment and maintenance, deficiencies in management, lack of integrated planning and coordination among different modes of transport, slow pace of technological improvement, inadequate manpower development, outdated legislative and commercial framework, lack of data and information and low private sector involvement.

31.55 The provision of an adequate transport and communications infrastructure and services is essential to support the economic and social development of the countries of the region, which is proceeding at a faster rate than in other regions. Inadequacies of the infrastructure and services are apparent and, unless rectified, will hinder future economic and social development. This especially concerns some transitional economies whose communications and transport systems are poorly incorporated in regional networks.

31.56 For many countries in the region, tourism is a major growth industry with strong potential as a contributing factor in socio-economic development. The tourism industry in the developing countries of the region is gaining recognition as an important means of earning foreign exchange and creating employment opportunities, as well as expanding their economic base, through its linkages with the agricultural, industrial and service sectors. It can also help reduce regional disparities in income and employment, since areas suitable for tourism are often situated far from the main centres of other economic activity. This sector, however, faces a number of problems and constraints that need to be addressed in order to harness fully the potential of tourism such as: (a) lack of clearly defined tourism policies; (b) lack of comprehensive perception of the socio-economic and environmental impact of

tourism; (c) lack of adequate expertise and facilities for manpower training; (d) inadequate tourism-related infrastructure; and (e) insufficient marketing skills. These issues could be tackled more effectively through closer cooperation among the countries of the region.

31.57 The objectives of the subprogramme are:

(a) To improve the transport and communications services and infrastructural facilities of the developing members and associate members to a level commensurate with their development objectives and priorities through the development of appropriate, well-balanced, coordinated and efficient transport and communications systems;

(b) To increase national capabilities in institutional development, including the formulation of development strategies, multimodalism and technology transfer; improvement of transport and communications operations; human resources development; promotion of commercialization; consideration of environmental, health and safety factors in transport development programmes; and urban transport development, in line with the themes, strategic themes and related issues identified for phase II of the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific (1992-1996);

(c) To increase the technical capacity of developing countries in their efforts to maximize socio-economic benefits from tourism development while minimizing its adverse impact.

(b) Course of action of the secretariat

31.58 In the field of transport and communications, the secretariat will continue to perform its catalytic role, during the medium-term plan period, in creating greater public awareness of the importance of transport and communications in the development process, in identifying systematically and in a comprehensive manner the problems of transport and communications in the region, and in formulating and promoting appropriate solutions to regional problems in the light of the objectives of the Decade. It will assume the lead role in inter-agency coordination and cooperation in the implementation of the regional activities related to the Decade. It will, in cooperation with the other regional commissions, develop interregional projects.

31.59 The secretariat will review the regional transport and communications development, and research and analyse related issues; monitor and coordinate the activities related to the second phase of the Decade at the national, subregional and regional levels; develop guidelines for legal frameworks and management information systems; promote the development of interregional and intraregional transport linkages, including the development of the Asian land transport infrastructure; assist in human resources development; promote the involvement of the private sector; and encourage the enhancement of transport databases. In undertaking the course of action, it will pay special attention to the least developed, land-locked and island developing countries.

31.60 In the field of tourism, major efforts will be devoted (a) to the improvement of policies for tourism development on the basis of an appraisal of the socio-economic and environmental impact of tourism; (b) to the strengthening of national capabilities in human resources development in the

tourism sector; (c) to the strengthening of national capabilities in tourism marketing and in taking effective steps to create a favourable investment climate for the development of tourism; and (d) to the promotion of regional and subregional cooperation in tourism development and promotion. Studies, seminars, workshops, meetings and technical advisory missions constitute the basic methods of assistance. Data and information on tourism development issues will be disseminated to members and associate members through various publications, including the ESCAP Tourism Review. The needs of Pacific island countries and the least developed countries as well as the Indochinese countries will receive the special attention of the secretariat in implementing tourism activities.

SUBPROGRAMME 5. STATISTICS

(a) Objectives

31.61 The legislative authority for the subprogramme is Commission resolution 246 (XLII) entitled "Statistical services in Asia and the Pacific", paragraphs 2 and 4.

31.62 Very few, if any, of the developing countries of the region are as yet completely able to satisfy, in terms of quantity, quality and timeliness, the requirements for information that the increasingly complex challenge of economic and social development demands. Available data often do not form a cohesive, consistent body of information that can be utilized in cross-sectoral analysis. The use of statistics is not yet sufficiently implanted into the policy formulation and decision-making processes in many countries, and there is an inadequate appreciation of the role of statisticians in the management of the economy. Throughout the region, budgetary constraints are hampering the development of national statistical services and inadequate human resources development is a key factor hindering strengthened statistical capability, especially in the application of computerized technology to statistical work.

31.63 Without readily available comparable regional data, administrators, policy makers and researchers encounter difficulties in the formulation of development programmes in the region, in monitoring the development process and in evaluating the impact of development plans generally and of regional cooperative arrangements and international development strategies in particular. There is currently no comprehensive integrated statistical database available with which to assess and monitor economic and social development in the region.

31.64 The application of information technology in the government sector offers one of the most promising prospects in developing countries for improving the planning and management of development. However, computerization of the government sector in the region is impeded by a number of obstacles, primarily institutional, organizational and human resource-related, but also technological. Moreover, existing government information systems in developing countries are concentrated at the central government level and are sectoral in nature, and thus do not adequately support the planning and management process. In addition, public sector computing increasingly requires a migration away from traditional data-processing applications, which deal with data in isolation from

day-to-day operations. In spite of recent developments that have brought information technology within their economic and practical grasp, developing countries are not yet equipped to deal with these matters because of limitations on their experience and expertise.

31.65 The objectives of the subprogramme are improving the quality and availability of demographic, social, economic and other statistics, their maintenance in a form suitable for retrieval and dissemination, and increasing the statistical capacity of developing countries in their efforts:

(a) To meet the aspirations expressed in Commission resolution 246 (XLII) concerning the improvement and strengthening of statistical services;

(b) To identify, collect, process, analyse and utilize data needed for the formulation, monitoring and evaluation of development plans and policies;

(c) To utilize modern information technology in the public sector at both central and subnational levels to facilitate the planning and management of economic and social development.

(b) Course of action of the secretariat

31.66 The secretariat will continue to help countries, through direct technical cooperation, to strengthen and consolidate their statistical capacity. With maturing capabilities in several countries of the region, greater emphasis will be placed on fostering all forms of regional cooperation, including technical cooperation among developing countries. The activities will also address the need for accuracy and timely dissemination of data, while work on requirements for guidelines, classifications and methodologies in existing and emerging activities will be continued, in conjunction with the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific. The application of new statistical techniques and the development of computerized information processing will receive due emphasis. Greater efforts will be made to improve skills in the interpretation, presentation and utilization of data, and issues relating to the management of statistical services will receive heightened prominence.

31.67 Advisory services will continue to be provided in such fields as national accounts, population censuses and surveys, household surveys and data processing. Transfer and exchange of statistical expertise through technical meetings and its dissemination through training courses and workshops will have a direct impact on human resources development in the field of statistics.

31.68 The subprogramme will undertake activities in support of other work of ESCAP, including the development, collection and dissemination of major economic aggregates and social indicators to facilitate analysis of regional trends, and improved harmonization, coverage and timeliness of statistics on trade and investment flows. Increasing concern with the qualitative aspects of development, including the quality of life, social justice and the environment, will also be reflected in the secretariat's activities, as will greater efforts at the measurement of poverty and other aspects of living standards, at both the macro and micro levels. In view of growing concern at the depletion of natural resource assets in the region, special attention will be paid to environmental and natural resource accounting.

31.69 Closer attention will also be paid to the intercountry comparability of data and work on the International Comparison Programme will continue to be supported. Activities will be undertaken to develop statistics on services. Special attention will be devoted to the transitional economies of the region in the context of assisting statistical services to adjust to national economic reform processes.

31.70 Automation of the database of ESCAP statistical publications will be developed gradually, both to provide better service to users and to utilize the secretariat's resources more efficiently. Efforts will continue to improve further the coverage, quality and comparability of data collected and disseminated by the secretariat, and attempts will also be made to attain consistency in national statistics and to assess their reliability. Efforts will be made to introduce a new dissemination service through the provision of statistics on diskettes for microcomputers and through other media. New compilations in specialized fields of statistics and for subregional groupings of countries may be issued. An ESCAP-wide integrated network of databases of economic, social and demographic statistics, providing access to the United Nations databases in New York and Geneva and other international agencies, will be completed and this will help revitalize the in-house statistical servicing aspects of the secretariat's work.

31.71 In public sector computerization, work will be targeted towards the realization of the potential of information technology and the intensification of its use throughout government, particularly at the subnational level.

SUBPROGRAMME 6. LEAST DEVELOPED, LAND-LOCKED AND ISLAND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

(a) Objectives

31.72 The legislative authority for the subprogramme derives from General Assembly resolutions 34/203, 34/210, 35/56, annex, paragraph 136, 35/205, 36/194, paragraphs 8, 10, 11 and 13, 40/205, 41/163, 42/177, 43/186, 43/189, 45/206 and 46/156; and Commission resolutions 244 (XLI) and 269 (XLIV).

31.73 Among the common structural characteristics of the least developed countries is a narrow domestic resource base with the bulk of the workforce engaged in subsistence agriculture, where productivity is low and modern cultivation practices have not made significant progress. The manufacturing sector, dominated by small-scale and cottage industries, contributes less than 10 per cent of GDP and employs only a small proportion of the labour force. Exports comprise mainly a few primary and semi-processed products, the prices and earnings for which are unstable. The domestic savings rate is generally low in these economies and consequently there is heavy dependence on external assistance and remittances for financing investment and imports. Human resources development levels are low, with a majority of the people deprived of minimum levels of nutrition, health care, housing, sanitation, education and transport services. Shortages of trained manpower and inadequate physical and institutional infrastructures are also bottlenecks in their development. The increased frequency and intensity of natural disasters have caused disruptions to the development process in many of these economies. Moreover, despite the adoption of the Substantial New Programme of Action for the 1980s for the Least Developed Countries, the socio-economic situation of these countries in the region generally deteriorated in the 1980s. For the most

part, the goals set in the Programme were not achieved and the average GDP growth of the least developed countries of the ESCAP region was much below the target of 7.2 per cent per annum envisaged in the Programme. Hence, their generally poor economic performance over the past decade, the growing income disparity between them and most other developing countries in the region and the large gap between the commitments and actual delivery of international assistance extended to them have raised serious concern for their growth prospects in the years ahead.

31.74 The unfavourable geographical situation of the land-locked countries results in transit and transport problems. This and other problems unique to the economies of this group of countries act as major impediments to their foreign trade and constitute one of the serious constraints to their economic and social development.

31.75 As for the island developing countries, as a group they have been growing at the slowest rate among ESCAP developing subregions. Given this relatively unfavourable record of economic performance through most of the past decade, they face the possibility of being mere sideline spectators to the high drama of growth and structural transformation being staged in the developing ESCAP region. Some of the major constraints to growth in the island developing economies are small domestic markets, lack of diversity in resources (in both natural endowments and human resources), heavy dependence on foreign imports, diseconomies of scale in the provision of infrastructural services and high concentration of exports on a few commodities, which increases trade vulnerability. Consequently, low growth has been exacerbated by high volatility in economic performance and the countries remain extremely vulnerable to economic shocks of both domestic and foreign origin. That vulnerability has created complications and has added costs in designing and implementing development policies and plans. It has also made the task of macroeconomic management and stabilization more difficult.

31.76 In the light of the above problems and concerns, emphasis will be placed on the need to renew international commitment to meet the special needs of the least developed, land-locked and island developing countries, as well as for these countries to make a concerted effo.. for more effective utilization of resources at their command, both generated internally and those flowing from abroad.

31.77 The objectives with regard to the least developed countries are to ensure the full implementation of the programme of action adopted by the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Paris in 1990, and to increase the technical capacity of those countries in the formulation, implementation and management of development activities.

31.78 The objectives with regard to land-locked developing countries are to increase the technical capacity of those countries in their efforts:

(a) To develop professional skills and effective personnel active in the field of trade;

(b) To formulate and implement an integrated transport planning strategy between land-locked and transit countries, and to build and improve their transit infrastructure;

(c) To conduct surveys of bottlenecks and problems in the transit trade between land-locked and transit countries, and develop measures to overcome them.

31.79 The objectives with respect to island developing countries are to increase the information and understanding of their economic performance and the implications of trade, finance and investment and to increase their technical capacity in their efforts to address their problems and formulate and implement development policies and plans.

(b) Course of action of the secretariat

31.80 With regard to the least developed countries, the implementation of the New Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s will be monitored and in-depth studies will be undertaken on the socio-economic situation and problems to be addressed. Emphasis will also be placed on technical cooperation in the form of consultancy, advisory services and training. Existing cooperation arrangements between these countries and other countries in the region will be strengthened, and new arrangements will be explored. One means towards strengthened cooperation will be the convening of cluster meetings as envisaged in the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s. In addition, the flow of technical and financial assistance from bilateral donors and multilateral financial institutions will be facilitated for the purpose of assisting the countries in accelerating their growth and alleviating their people's poverty.

31.81 As regards land-locked developing countries, close inter-programming consultations will be held to identify and implement projects relevant to their special development needs, and cooperation will be promoted between land-locked and transit countries. The economic conditions of those countries will be analysed and training will be conducted to improve managerial and technical skills in the private and public sectors, particularly in relation to trade and transport.

31.82 As for island developing countries, their social and economic problems will be analysed in greater detail and development profiles of their economies will be prepared and updated periodically. Seminars, workshops and training programmes will be conducted on selected issues in development policy and planning, and in this connection human resources development activities will receive high priority. Advisory services will be provided and exploratory work will be carried out on promoting greater subregional and regional cooperation, especially in the area of foreign investment and trade.

ANNEX

Paragraphs in the current text (A/45/6/Rev.1) that have not been substantially modified

Paragraphs in A/45/6/Rev.1	Paragraphs in the revised programme
31.1	31.1
31.2	31.2
31.3	31.3
31.5 (first sentence)	31.8
31.6	31.9
31.7	31.11
31.65	31.15
31.57-31.63 (elements thereof)	31.16
31.19 (partially)	31.19
31.67 (d)	31.20
31.63	31.22
31.23-31.24	31.28
31.32	31.31
31.25	31.36
31.81	31.38
31.40-31.41	31.47
31.121 (c)	31.49
31.86	31.50
31.12-31.14	31.51
31.47-31.55	31.52
31.113	31.54
31.114	31.55
31.115 (a)	31.57 (a)
31.116	31.58
31.102-31.111	31.61-31.71